

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TAGS: PINS, ELAB, IS
SUBJECT: THE ARAB VOTE AND THE KNESSET ELECTION

1. SUMMARY: CURRENT PROSPECTS ARE THAT THE NUMBER OF ARAB AND MINORITY KNESSET MEMBERS WILL INCREASE FROM THE PRESENT SIX TO BETWEEN SEVEN AND NINE. OF THESE, THREE ARE LIKELY TO BE RAKAH MEMBERS, ONE A MAPAM MEMBER ON THE ALIGNMENT LIST, TWO OR THREE FROM THE UNITED ARAB LIST, AND POSSIBLY ONE OR TWO DRUSES ON THE DMC LIST. A SEPARATE ARAB REFORM MOVEMENT LIST IS GIVEN LITTLE CHANCE TO PLACE ITS CANDIDATES IN THE KNESSET. ALTHOUGH THE UNITED ARAB LIST IS EXPECTED TO SUPPORT THE ALIGNMENT, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE ARAB RESENTMENT OVER THE FAILURE OF THE LABOR PARTY TO ACCORD ARABS REALISTIC PLACES ON ITS KNESSET LIST. SINCE THE POST-ELECTION COALITION WILL PROBABLY AT BEST ENJOY ONLY A SMALL MAJORITY, THE ARAB MEMBERS CAN BE EXPECTED TO ASSERT THEMSELVES AND TO MAKE SURE THEY WILL NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED. RESENTMENT OF LABOR PARTY INDIFFERENCE TO THE ARABS MAY SERVE TO INCREASE THE ABSTENTION RATE

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OF THOSE WHO DO NOT WISH TO VOTE RAKAH BUT SEE NO ARAB STAKE IN THE ELECTION OUTCOME. ARAB INTEREST IN THE HISTADRUT ELECTION IS LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERABLY GREATER. HOWEVER, HERE TOO A STRONG CHALLENGE OF THE ALIGNMENT FORCES BY RAKAH CAN BE EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO LABOR PARTY AND HISTADRUT SOURCES

CLOSE TO THE ARAB SECTOR, RAKAH MAY RECEIVE 60-65 PERCENT OF THE ARAB VOTES, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO GIVING THE COMMUNISTS SEVEN KNESSET SEATS, THREE OF THEM TO BE HELD BY ARABS. ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF THE ARAB VOTE IS EXPECTED TO GO TO THE UNITED ARAB LIST HEADED BY SEIF EL DIN EL ZOUABI, WHICH MAY ASSURE IT TWO OR THREE KNESSET SEATS. ABOUT 8-10,000 ARAB VOTES ARE EXPECTED TO GO TO THE ALIGNMENT, MOSTLY IN SUPPORT OF MAPAM CANDIDATE IBRAHIM SHEBAT OF HAIFA (IN 40TH PLACE ON THE ALIGNMENT LIST). TWO DRUSE CANDIDATES IN 12TH AND 13TH PLACE ON THE DMC LIST ARE ALSO GIVEN A FAIR CHANCE TO BE ELECTED. A DRUSE CANDIDATE HOLDING 39TH PLACE ON THE LIKUD LIST IS NOT EXPECTED TO MAKE IT.

3. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE ARAB AND OTHER MINORITY RESSENTMENT OVER THE FAILURE TO INCLUDE ANY OTHER ARAB, DRUSE, OR BEDOUIN CANDIDATES ON THE ALIGNMENT LIST. ARAB LEADERS NORMALLY SUPPORTIVE OF LABOR FEEL THAT THEY HAVE BEEN IGNORED IN THIS ELECTION, DESPITE THE CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGE WHICH THEY FACE FROM RAKAH. THEY CLAIM THAT MANY ARABS WHO MIGHT HAVE SUPPORTED THE ALIGNMENT IN OPPOSITION TO THE COMMUNIST RAKAH WILL NOW SIMPLY ABSTAIN FROM AN ELECTION IN WHICH THEY HAVE LITTLE PERSONAL STAKE.

4. TWO SMALL SEPARATE ARAB LISTS ARE RUNNING KNESSET CANDIDATES. THE UNITED ARAB LIST HEADED BY ZOUABI INCLUDES SHEIK HAMMAD ABU RABIYA, A BEDOUIN LEADER, AND JABER MUADI, A DRUSE AND CURRENTLY DEPUTY MINISTER OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGRICULTURE. ALL THREE ARE KNESSET MEMBERS AFFILIATED WITH THE ALIGNMENT. HOWEVER, THEIR LIST IS NOW INDEPENDENT, ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO SUPPORT AN ALIGNMENT-LED FUTURE COALITION. THE ARAB REFORM MOVEMENT LIST IS HEADED BY MUHAMMAD ABASSI, A JERUSALEM JOURNALIST, WHO FAILED TO GET A REALISTIC PLACE ON EITHER THE ALIGNMENT OR THE UNITED ARAB LIST DESPITE THE STRONG BACKING OF FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON, WHOSE INTERPRETER AND ADVISOR ON ARAB AFFAIRS HE HAD BEEN WHEN ALLON WAS MINISTER OF EDUCATION. ABASSI'S FRIENDS ATTRIBUTE HIS FAILURE TO ATTAIN A REALISTIC PLACEMENT ON EITHER OF THE TWO LISTS TO PRO-PERES ELEMENTS. THE ARAB REFORM LIST PLANS TO APPEAL TO INTELLECTUALS BUT, LACKING SUPPORT AMONG YOUNG ARAB STUDENTS, STANDS LITTLE CHANCE TO WIN EVEN ONE KNESSET SEAT.

5. CONSIDERING THAT THE ALIGNMENT EXPECTS ONLY MARGINAL SUPPORT FROM THE ARAB COMMUNITY IN THE KNESSET ELECTION, IT WILL CONCENTRATE ITS PRINCIPAL EFFORT ON RETAINING

ARAB SUPPORT IN THE HISTADRUT ELECTION ON JUNE 21, ES-
PECIALLY IN THE LOCAL LABOR COUNCILS. HISTADRUT AND
LABOR COUNCIL ELECTIONS ARE FOR MOST ARABS MUCH CLOSER
TO HOME THAN KNESSET ELECTIONS, SINCE THE HISTADRUT
SUPPLIES HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND LOCAL WELFARE SERVICES
TO THE ARAB COMMUNITIES, AND ARRANGES AGRICULTURAL
MARKETING, WATER SUPPLY, AND OTHER SERVICES TOUCHING
DIRECTLY ON MEMBERS' WELFARE. THE HISTADRUT ARAB DEPARTMENT
CURRENTLY EXPECTS THAT THE NAZARETH LABOR COUNCIL, WITH ABOUT
10,000 VOTING MEMBERS, WILL GO TO RAKAH. HOWEVER,
IN SFAR AM, THE SECOND LARGEST ARAB LABOR COUNCIL,
THE ALIGNMENT HOPES TO RE-ELECT THE INCUMBENT LABOR
SECRETARY HALIL MICHE'EL. INTENSIVE HISTADRUT ELECTION
ACTIVITIES IN ARAB COMMUNITIES ARE ALREADY IN PROGRESS.
HISTADRUT SECRETARY GENERAL MESHEL HAS PROMISED THAT
FOR THE FIRST TIME AN ARAB WILL BECOME A MEMBER OF
THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU, THE HIGHEST POLICY DIRECTING BODY
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OF THE HISTADRUT. THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE WILL BE
GEORGE SA'AD, THE INCUMBENT SECRETARY OF THE NAZARETH
LABOR COUNCIL. THE OFFER TO NOMINATE HIM TO THE NEXT
EXECUTIVE BUREAU APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MADE AS AN
INDUCEMENT TO HAVE HIM RUN FOR RE-ELECTION DESPITE
GREAT ODDS THAT HE MAY LOSE TO A RAKAH CANDIDATE.
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